

# *DECLARE INDEPENDENCE!*

On the evening of July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress officially approved Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence officially broke all political ties between England and the 13 colonies.

When Jefferson wrote the Declaration, he outlined it in a very logical and easy to understand format. That format is outlined below:

## **1) Preamble**

Jefferson began the Declaration with a preamble, or a formal introduction. His formal introduction stated the purpose of the document which was to break all political ties between England and the colonies.

## **2) Natural Rights**

Thomas Jefferson followed his preamble with a list of natural rights. Jefferson stated that natural rights are given to everyone by God at birth. According to Jefferson, it is the job of government to protect the natural rights of its citizens. Furthermore, according to Jefferson, if a government ceases to protect the natural rights of its citizens, the citizens have the right to abolish the government and create a new one.

## **3) British Wrongs**

In the third section of the Declaration of Independence Jefferson lists all of the ways that England and King George III had violated the colonists' natural rights. He uses these examples as evidence proving that the 13 colonies are justified in ending their relationship with England.

## **4) Conclusion**

The fourth section of the Declaration of Independence is a conclusion. Jefferson used the conclusion to sum up his points. He argued that since England violated the natural rights of the colonists, the colonists are fully justified in breaking away from England. He then formally declared that the "united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states."

Your job, like Jefferson's, is to declare independence. You are to declare independence from some form of tyranny currently ruling your life. You can declare independence from school, your parents, me, or any other form of authority that you feel is unfairly governing your life!

After you declare your independence, you need to announce your independence in a formal document. Your declaration of independence needs to follow the same format as Jefferson's. You need to have a preamble, a list of your rights, examples of how your rights are being violated and a formal conclusion announcing your independence.

Write your declaration of independence on the attached sheet. Please make it legible. If you would like, you can also type your declaration. However, if you type your declaration you need to make sure that you follow the same format as Jefferson. Your declaration is to be handed in on \_\_\_\_\_. Each of the four sections of your declaration is worth 5 points. The assignment as a whole is worth 20 points.

## **My Declaration of Independence from**

### **Preamble:**

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### **Rights:**

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### **Ways that you have been wronged:**

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### **Conclusion:**

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## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE GRADING RUBRIC

1) Preamble:        / 5

2) Natural Rights:        / 5

Total:        /20

3) British Wrongs:        / 5

4) Conclusion:        / 5

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